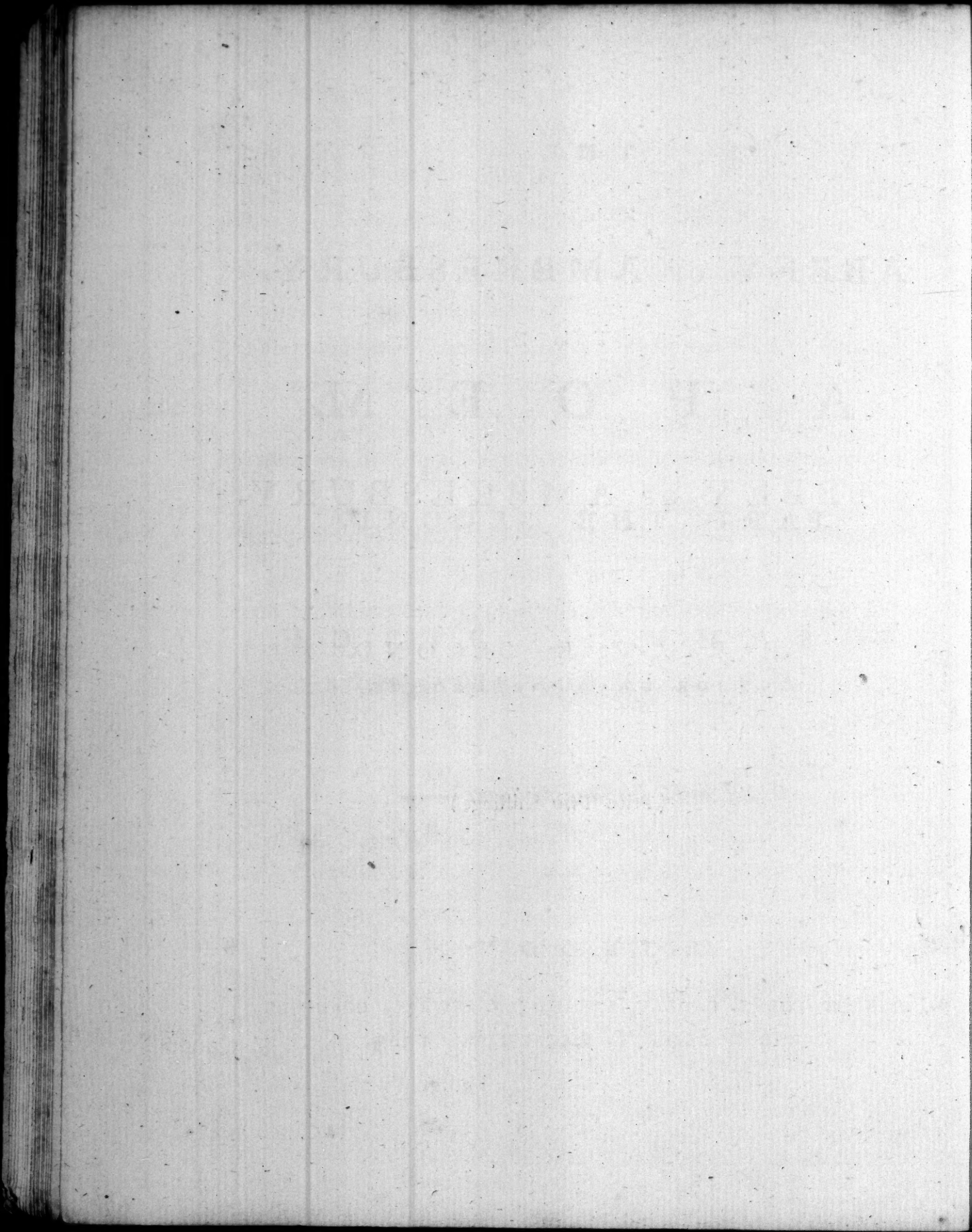


T H E

ABBEY OF AMBRESBURY.

(Price Two Shillings)



THE
ABBEY OF AMBRESBURY.

A P O E M.

PART THE SECOND.

By SAMUEL BIRCH,
AUTHOR OF CONSILIA, &c.

“ Sit mihi fas audita loqui — ”

Virg.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, STRAND; J. SEWELL, CORNHILL;
AND J. DEBRETT, PICCADILLY. 1789.

THE
ABBACY OF AMBERBURGH

A B O E M

THE
PART THE SECOND

BY
A. B. O. E. M.

ON THE
THE

L O N D O N

PRINTED BY
J. B. O. E. M.

T H E
ABBNEY OF AMBRESBURY.

PART THE SECOND.

THY Friend, ELTRUDA, hapless Fair! shall close
The melancholy page of cloister'd woes.

Form'd for the sprightly dance, and skill'd to move
The silver breathing Lute to notes of love —
In hardihood and stern atchievement great —
In every science, every grace compleat —

For these ST. GERMAINS bore the first report;
The Flower of British Youth at EDWARD's Court.

B

In

THE ABBEY OF AMBRESBURY.

In vain allurement arm'd th' enamour'd dame,
And many a love-sick maid confess'd her flame.
He shunn'd alliance with the noblest birth,
Most blooming beauty, most transcendant worth ;
Tho' wealthiest captives for his empire strove,
He scorn'd to rule the heart he could not love.
His soul was free and unsubdued by care :
Fame touch'd his soul, his mistress was the War.
Train'd in her school, of all her fire possess'd,
With ENGLAND'S Glory tow'ring on his crest,
He woo'd her dangers with a lover's zeal,
Nor own'd a passion but his country's weal.

Unmindful of the tear that urg'd his stay,
The fond entreaty, and the feign'd delay,
When her big voice the dreadful mandate gave,
And blew her clarion o'er the northern wave ;
Another MARS he hew'd his purple way,
Spread wide destruction round, and flash'd dismay.
In one fierce conflict scarce could he sustain
The thick'ning tumults of the hot campaign ;

But

But slow returning from the crimson field,
By wounds exhausted, and constrain'd to yield ;
With one brave veteran of the martial Band,
He sadly journey'd towards his much lov'd land.

It chanc'd one evening, as he pass'd between
The velvet pastures of autumnal green,
Oppress'd with heat and languishing he view'd
The gentle course of DERWENT's silver flood.
The limpid current o'er its golden sand
Wav'd, with alluring lustre, thro' the Land.
Parching with thirst his sinking spirits crave
The grateful bev'rage of the cooling wave.
Low on the verdant brink as he reclin'd
To quaff the copious draught, he heard behind
A sudden shriek, whose piteous accent pierc'd
The soft recesses of the Hero's breast.
He call'd aloud " my brave ANSELMO, haste !
" Quickly alight and bind the chargers fast :

At

“ At distance follow, and if need appear,
“ For well I know thy faithful spirits dare,
“ Pursue my fortune, and my danger share.” } }

He said; and e're ANSELMO could obey,
Led by the voice he takes the nearest way.
Thro' a thick tangled coppice before untrod
With manly front and dauntless soul he strode.
Together now their rugged course they found
Down fearful steeps, where horrid umbrage frown'd:
But all regardless of declining day
Which from the thick'ning gloom dissolv'd away,
Mid' low-roof'd rocks and cavern'd ways they go,
Made vocal with the shrill complaints of woe.
Shriek answering shriek in swift succession flies,
And the hoarse threat in deeper tone replies.
Firm they proceed; but still with cautious tread—
Their glitt'ring faulchions gleam along the shade—
At length, beneath the twilight grey appear
The stern Barbarians and defenceless Fair.
So coarse the conflict, that in quest of food
Had prowld the fullen savage of the wood,
His nobler nature would have left his prey,
With sudden sorrow pierc'd, and turn'd away.

Had

Had fabled ATE thro' the dreary place
Pour'd her red tide, or urg'd her stubborn chace,
So foul a deed had stopp'd her wild career,
And from her blood-stain'd eye-ball forc'd a tear.
“ Barbarians, hold !” ST. GERMAINS loudly cries,
“ Or by this arm who still advances dies !”
Then high in air preparing for the fight
The brandish'd weapons pour'd a dreadful light—
The ruffians left the dame, the strife began,
With shield to shield oppos'd, and man to man.
One way-ward blow unable to repel
The stagg'ring chief receiv'd, and backward fell.
'Twas then ANSELMO that thy faithful zeal
New strung thine arm, and edg'd the furious steel.
Across thy master well did'st thou sustain
Th' unequal combat, and thy ground maintain ;
Till stung to madness, furious in his pain,
With double fire ST. GERMAINS rose again,
And on the villain soon his blow repaid —
Forth from his entrails smok'd the purple blade.
The other sought his life by dastard flight,
In safety shrowded by the failing light.

Pursuit was vain, they now approach'd the fair,
Who seem'd, alas! already past their care.
Awhile each ineffectual art they strove —
The bosom ceas'd to heave, the pulse to move.
While THIS with decent, but indignant haste,
The savage bondage of the cord unbrac'd :
THAT freshest water from the spring apply'd,
And every tender mean of comfort try'd.
At length the struggling blood its course began,
Deep sigh'd the heart, and tears in torrents ran.
Rais'd from the Earth her flutt'ring accents broke.
The solemn silence first, and thus she spoke ;
“ Oh ! but unbind me, and my patient soul
“ Shall strive obedience to your wild controul ;
“ Yet whither will your dark commission go ?
“ Speak ! let my heart its worst affliction know !”

“ Thou fair unknown,” ST. GERMAINS now reply'd,
“ Fall'n are thy foes, let all thy fears subside.
“ Calm the vast tumult of thy lab'ring breast —
“ Hush'd be thy griefs, and soothe thy soul to rest :

“ Devoted

“ Devoted to thy safety here we stand —
“ Direct our course, we wait but thy command.”

“ Oh ! do not mock me,” so the Dame rejoin’d,
“ Nor thus insult the sorrows of my mind : —
“ If Heav’n-directed, tis your lot to save
“ A wretch already panting for the grave ;
“ Oh ! say by what mysterious means you found,
“ Paths so perplex and horrors so profound : —
“ Or rather say, if from some blest abode
“ A fainted Spirit brings relief from God.
“ For sure the herbage of this dismal place
“ Ne’er felt the footsteps of the human race.
“ But if in truth your visit is to spare,
“ And you make innocence indeed your care,
“ Bear me to HAREWOOD’s ever honour’d Bow’rs,
“ Wide spreading plains, and high aspiring tow’rs :
“ So its full incense gratitude shall raise,
“ In wealth, if Mortal, and if Saint, in praise.”
“ Alas ! bright Angel ! little do we know,
(So spake the Warrior to the Maid of Woe)

“ Of:

“ Of HAREWOOD’s honour’d bow’rs, or where to find
“ The path that leaves these hateful scenes behind.
“ Here murky night in wild disorder low’rs —
“ There down the steepy rock the distant torrent roars” —
With equal joy, the shipwreck’d wretch describes
The lofty sail and spiral mountain rise ;
Clings to the shatter’d raft, no more dismay’d,
As springs the well row’d galley to his aid ;
And hears, blest music ! echo from the shore
The waves resounding to the straining oar.
With equal joy, and not with less surprize,
The eager damsel to the chief replies ;
“ Oh heav’nly found ! that torrent be our guide !
“ Together let us tempt the mountain side,
“ Pursue the borders of its angry course,
“ And trace the fountain to its sacred source.
“ Behind the castle walls the issuing flood
“ Oërleaps the dam, and deluges the wood ;
“ Headlong the cataract its fury pours
“ Down rocky fragments, and tremendous shores.”
Scarce had she said, when the new rising moon
Behind the mountain’s height resplendent shone ;

Her

Her silver light the castle tops betray'd,
And mark'd the turrets in opposing shade.
Her heart revives ; and now they slowly move
With lab'ring steps, a tedious length of grove.
Then onward soon the frowning rock they gain,
Where the hoarse torrent levels with the plain,
And the white surge its rapid course divides,
And prattles thro' the glade in gentle tides.
When now the moon had scal'd the mountain's brow,
And shed a seeming frost on all below ;
As up the shaggy steep ascending flow,
With livelier faith, and surer steps they go ;
The thund'ring waters plunging to the base,
In deep and horrid din their rage increase.
Wearied and faint with pain and peril past,
To HAREWOOD's castle gate they come at last.
The wakeful guard who had in vain explor'd
The various paths, now pass'd the joyful word ; —
The spreading news which leap'd from every tongue,
Along the echoing walls in concert rung.
The feeble lamps but glimmer half their light,
With over-watching and the waste of night.

The drawbridge past, or e'er the hall they gain,
The warm effusions of the menial train
On every side in grateful notes ascend,
To welcome back their mistress and their friend.
Now on the Dame their eyes with transport gaze —
Now on the Stranger fasten with amaze —
Survey his graceful port, his lofty tread —
His graceful length of hair adown his shoulders spread.
Across the courts with eager pace they bend,
And to the BARON'S splendid tow'r ascend.
On his lone couch the good old man they found,
Stretch'd at his length in mute affliction drown'd.
His folded arms the shrowding mantle held,
Which his wan visage, and hoar locks conceal'd.
With soothing caution kneeling at his side,
"The Daughter lives to bless her Sire," she cry'd;
At her known voice the Sire upstart'd wild,
"Art thou indeed my CONSTANCE? Speak, my child!"
Her tender form his aged arms surround,
Close to his heart in mutual transport bound.
The struggling bliss broke forth, and gave to flow
The sacred tears, that were denied his woe —

The

The tongue was silent ; but the speaking eye
Sparkled with eloquence, and stream'd with joy.

So at the Eve of some tempestuous day,
The setting sun emits a brighter ray ;
And thro' the dew drops of the ling'ring show'r
With heighten'd splendor gilds his parting hour.

The vanquish'd CHIEF, who could no more disguise
The mother's softness that bedew'd his eyes,
Indulg'd the weakness with averted head,
And the kind sympathy in secret shed.
Impatient now enquires the aged LORD

What foes betray'd her, or what love restor'd.

" Alas ! my honour'd Sire," rejoin'd the MAID,

" What dangers threaten'd, or what foes betray'd,

" Befits not now to say ; but this I can,

" 'Tis to the valour of this godlike man,

" My life, and all the joys *that* life shall know,

" And most of all, this present bliss I owe."

Thus

Thus she ; and on her knees with kisses press'd
His trembling hand, who thus the youth address'd :

“ Brave Youth ! tho' little 'tis my thanks can pay,

“ (Then paus'd to wipe the falling tears away)

“ Yet he who owns a kindness, paves the way

“ For more substantial gratitude, and gives

“ Proof that a sense of obligation lives.

“ An Old Man's blessing do not disregard,

“ For blest thou shalt be, if my pray'rs are heard.

“ A two-fold life has grac'd thy conquering sword :

“ For with my Child my Being is restor'd.

“ She fans the flame that animates my clay —

“ She is the Sun, that cheers declining day —

“ She doubles ev'ry bliss that life bestows,

“ And smooths the pillow for my last repose.

“ Of other fame we are by time despoil'd,

“ Life's lasting glory is a virtuous Child !

“ What vast demands of recompence are thine !

“ What weight of heart-felt gratitude is mine !

“ Now hear me, valiant Youth ! e're we retire

“ To the soft banquet, which thy toils require :

“ When

“ When gen’rous wine and all sustaining food
“ Thy fainting spirits have with joy renew’d ;
“ And on the couch with balmy slumbers blest’d,
“ Exhausted nature is restor’d by rest ;
“ Let thy free soul throughout my great domain
“ Wing unreserv’d to what she would obtain ;
“ Make known the meed, to which your deeds aspire,
“ If I can give—enough that you desire.”

ST. GERMAINS answer’d with a lowly bow ;
His cheeks suffus’d with deeper crimson glow.
All due prepar’d, the shining valves unfold,
Low blaze the lamps sustain’d by chains of gold —
The brilliant flame emits a warm perfume,
And softest music floats along the dome.
The virgin band exalt the vocal lay,
And all the skill of harmony display.
The glitt’ring board upholds a rich repast,
Fair to the eye, and grateful to the taste.
The high illumin’d roof, and every part
Bespeak the painter’s, or the sculptor’s art.

Here with bold strength and softest hue are seen
The Trojan Wanderer, and the Tyrian Queen.
Pierc'd with his tale the hero seems to speak,
And the big tear rolls down his manly cheek —
In mute attention fix'd, the royal fair
Melts at his woes, and still desires to hear;
And all unconscious of her heav'nly guest,
Plays with the infant god, and hugs him to her breast.

There the wise ruler of the Grecian host,
Twice ten years exil'd from his native coast,
The painful bondage of CALYPSO mourns,
And her free love reluctantly returns;
The lofty bark unfinish'd at his side,
Invites the gale, and courts the rising tide.

Now in his palace, mid' the suitor train,
The monarch in the canvas breathes again.
Despis'd and wretched in his mean disguise,
His bow inflexible to all, he tries.

Drawn

Drawn to the head, the arrow seems to spring,
And his skill'd hand release the founding string.
Stung to the quick the baffled suitors rave,
And wreak their curses on the seeming slave.
Each in its turn is every tale pourtray'd,
In all the eloquence of light and shade.
Below appear, in equal order plac'd,
Busts of the men, whom arms or virtue grac'd.
Thence smaller figures of no vulgar fame
Preserve the station equal to their claim.

When largely fated, each exalted soul
Had drawn refreshment from the mantling bowl:
All from the banquet rose with one consent,
And to the welcome couch delighted went.
Propitious sleep now shed her softest pow'rs,
And wav'd her downy wings o'er HAREWOOD' tow'rs.

When now the moon descending from her height
Had lost her glory in superiour light;

And

And the warm sun his splendid course purfu'd,
And all creation at his glance renew'd.
ST. GERMAINS rose, and all alone survey'd
The stately pile, in costliest grace array'd.
Thro' the high vaulted avenues he pass'd,
Where scatter'd arms a fullen radiance cast:
And a long line the martial scene proclaim'd
Of noble ancestry, for valour fam'd:
For sable armour each recess contain'd,
Grim as the bones which once its weight sustain'd.
Huge piles of spears in rough arrangement stood,
And vests that still bore witness to their blood.
Amaz'd he wanders thro', and now ascends
The solemn porch that to the altar bends.
The sacrifice at his pious work he found,
The censer breathes ambrosial sweets around.
The storied window shades the solar ray
With soften'd lustre and religious day.
The glitt'ring shrine did silver rails enfold ——
The holy purple blaz'd with fringe of gold ——
With softest texture was the pavement spread ——
Soft to the knee, and silent to the tread.

While

While these by turns employ'd his curious eye,
The aged BARON and the FAIR drew nigh.
And all the menial train oerjoy'd were there,
To join in exercise of grateful pray'r.
The choir began, and music sweetly stole
With solemn swell to each affected soul.
The youthful hero softens at the scene —
Nor dares enquire what his sensations mean.
Fix'd like a statue he regards the maid,
Wishing to meet, yet of her glance afraid.
His eager passion starting at his eye
Met the mild ray, that shot a fair reply.
No longer can the holy work controul
The soft confusion of her captive soul;
Oerwhelm'd with blushes glows her burning cheek,
And her short sighs unerring language speak.
The service ended, to the neat repast
With social converse cheerfully they haste.
ST. GERMAINS with contending passions tost,
At length bespoke his venerable host: —
“ My gracious Lord! it fits I now depart —
“ 'Tis with reluctance, and an aching heart

F

I leave

" I leave your friendly roof, but need I say,

" When duty calls, a foldier must obey ?

" With fond remembrance will my bosom glow

" Of HAREWOOD'S virtues wheresoe'er I go."

At this unbidden rose a secret sigh,

To whom the DAME observing made reply:

" My kind Preserver ! if in honour's scale

" One wish of CONSTANCE or her Sire avail,

" Some short delay, methinks, you might extend ;

" Severe is parting with a faithful friend."

Entranc'd he listen'd, and his heart gave way ;

Glad to consent, yet fear'd his longer stay.

Two days elaps'd, and each tumultuous breast

In secret suffer'd unreliev'd by rest.

When the third morn in cloudless splendour shone,

ST. GERMAINS stray'd, dejected and alone,

And o'er the lawn a calm recess had sought,

To court composure and indulge his thought :

CONSTANCE, whose slumbers fled at earliest light,

With sudden beauty burst upon his sight.

No

No borrow'd aid his cheated sense disarms,
She moves majestic with a world of charms.
Her roseate lips complacent smiles betray,
The fragrant emblems of the dawn of day.
Enchantment held him, scarce could he sustain
The flood of transport rising e'en to pain.
In such a form, such grace, so dazzling bright,
The Paphian GODDESS left fair Ida's height;
Like DIAN's Nymph her virgin bloom array'd,
To meet ENEAS in the Sylvan shade.
And such delight the Trojan Chief express'd,
When her refulgent form the QUEEN OF LOVE confess'd.

They met with joy, auspicious was the hour
For each full bosom to release its store;
ST. GERMAINS with presaging heart began,
While thro' his nerves a gentle tremor ran,
" O! to my soul most dear! my eyes most fair
" Of all that light reveals or mortals share,
" First of thy Sex! to whom alone is giv'n,
" To make this earth a blank, or early heav'n!

Say!

" Say ! if obedient to your gracious Sire,
 " Whose promise gave such scope to my desire,
 " My vast ambition should aspire to move
 " His daughter's pity to a soldier's love,
 " Would CONSTANCE cherish the presumptuous flame,
 " Return my passion, and enforce my claim ;
 " Or drive to dark despair ST. GERMAINS wretched name ?
 " Beauty till now bloom'd all alike to me,
 " Howe'er my eyes admir'd, my heart was free ;
 " Beauty I priz'd ;—but could no passion own
 " For all the charms that circled EDWARD's throne.
 " Then here my soul's first sacrifice I pour,
 " Here will I kneel, here only I adore ——
 " From this blest hour for thee alone I live,
 " Dear maid ! my vows or suffer, or forgive."

With conscious joy elate, the tender maid
 Sigh'd e're she spoke, and to her Hero said :

" Dear youth ! tho' caution is the virgin's part,
 " To words so flatt'ring to a female heart :

Tho'

“ Tho’ well I know, that many have been won
“ By such solicitude, and been undone :
“ Yet, strongly charm’d, if in my woman’s breast
“ I dare indulge a thought to make me blest,
“ If gratitude should aid the dawn of love,
“ Which virtues such as thine could only move,
“ If loving I confess, in prudence’ spite,
“ And inly chaste assert my sex’s right,
“ In thy esteem shall CONSTANCE suffer? No!
“ Thou hast been noble, and must still be so!
“ For witness to the truth, ye saints above!
“ Ye spirits that attend on woman’s love!
“ That never thought or wish has CONSTANCE known
“ But rigid chastity might call her own.
“ Yet now my sex’s softness, dearest youth!
“ Yields to thy vows, and listens to thy truth.
“ Then sadly conscious how shall I declare,
“ What sorrows me to tell, and you to hear?
“ When youthful suitors crowded to obtain
“ My young unpractis’d heart, and strove in vain,
“ My father from the rest thought fit approve
“ One whom my wayward fancy ne’er could love;

G

“ And

“ And promise gave, if in his days I wed,
“ None but the loath’d SIR PIERCE should share my bed.
“ And pledg’d I stand to my dear Father’s word,
“ If still I own him not my lawful lord,
“ Here to remain, till,—distant be the doom!
“ My honor’d BARON sinks into his tomb.
“ Nor can I less; for many a widow’d year
“ Has multiply’d the sigh, and swell’d the tear,
“ Since the fair Mistress of this favor’d plain
“ Forsook the charge connubial Rites ordain.
“ She gave me life, a life her lord desir’d,
“ Rear’d me with care, and from the world retir’d.
“ To me consign’d, as yet of tender age,
“ To blot her mem’ry, and his cares assuage.

“ THOU CLOISTER’D SAINT! how shall a daughter dare
“ To chide thy faith, thy penitence and pray’r?
“ But ah! too fatally at last I feel,
“ The dire effects of thy destructive zeal.
“ What mighty magic wears a convent’s gloom,
“ To wean thy love and duty from their home?

“ What

“ What strong illusion could seduce thy heart
“ From the first bond of nature to depart ?
“ What demon plunder of the joys of life
“ So blest a mother, and more blest a Wife ?
“ What thy fair mind at AM’ESBURY could move
“ To sicken at these calm retreats of love ?
“ For me remains affectionate and just,
“ To fill with tenderness the sacred trust :
“ And tho’ my love, immeasurably strong,
“ Would dare at happiness,—it shrinks from wrong—
“ Nor must I e’er forsake the hoary head,
“ The heart that lov’d me, and the hand that fed.”

“ Thy words exalt my love !” the youth rejoin’d,
“ Pure emanations of thy spotless mind !
“ Nor dare I shake the principle within,
“ I love the saint, and fear to tempt with sin.
“ While yet my reason governs, let me part—
“ Lest my brain catch the anguish of my heart—
“ Quick to my country’s banners let me fly—
“ Rush in the thickest ranks, and wish to die—

“ Yet

“ Yet even there, tho’ hosts around are slain,
“ And crimson slaughter deluges the plain ;
“ Thy fancied form my guardian genius still
“ Shall guide my shield, to baffle ev’ry ill :
“ And when, the din of war exhausted quite,
“ Descending darkness intercept the fight,
“ Then in my tent a couch of down prepare,
“ And sooth the rigor of the midnight air,
“ Shed gentle sleep, oblivion to my pain,
“ Brighten my dreams, and waft me here again !”

To him the Maid ; — “ O let our fears remove,
“ The blest inventive faculty of love
“ Provides a way, to make our hopes succeed,
“ And strictest honour shall applaud the deed.
“ But be thou bound by every sacred tie,
“ By which our vows are register’d on high,
“ Patient to wait, tho’ added year on year
“ Shall claim and witness to my filial care ;
“ Till I can call thee, exil’d from thy state,
“ And hail thee lord of HAREWOOD’s blissful seat !

“ Be

“ Be bound in this!” ST. GERMAINS cried, “ Then hear !
 “ This to obey, by Heav’ns high throne I swear !
 “ Lord of thy love is all the wealth I claim,
 “ More proud that title than a monarch’s name.”
 With glowing transport scarce could CONSTANCE speak,
 Joy dimm’d her sight, and mantled in her cheek.
 Her conscious breast beat high with new alarms,
 She sunk abash’d within her hero’s arms.
 But soon rejoin’d ; “ When now yon’ sacred ray
 “ Shall close the journey of his splendid day,
 “ When thick’ning night her darkest shadow spreads—
 “ And solemn stillness thro’ the castle sheds—
 “ With trembling caution to the shrine repair,
 “ And holy AUSTIN shall attend us there :
 “ In sacred nuptials shall our souls be blest,
 “ For gold shall silence and secure the priest.
 “ Then may’st thou go—altho’ thy CONSTANCE mourn,
 “ And oft’ to HAREWOOD—very oft’ return ——
 “ By friendship seeming, tho’ by blood allied,
 “ With thy unconscious Sire shalt thou abide,
 “ And the keen transports of thy secret Bride.”

H

Then

Then closely lock'd within his firm embrace,
She hid the soft confusion of her face.

The compact made, each distant art they strove
To lull suspicion, and disguise their love :
Restrain'd their raptures, and remain'd among
The festive board, and rais'd the pow'rs of song.
But each in secret chid the dull delay,
And lazy progress of the setting day.
At length the 'custom'd rites and honours ceas'd ——
And all consenting would retire to rest ——
The GOOD OLD MAN his usual blessing leaves ——
Which each with more than usual joy receives.

Now had the filken cords of slumber brac'd
The busy brain, and care awhile releas'd ;
The longing pair most faithful to the hour,
Softly and slowly draw the silent door :
And all so hush, that each unbidden sigh
Along the tell-tale cloister seem'd to die.

The

The smould'ring lamps but shed terrific glare,——
It so resembled guilt they quak'd with fear.
Not long beneath the sacred roof they wait,
The PRIEST suborn'd was ready at the gate:
And soon his office link'd their blooming youth
In the soft bands of innocence and truth.
The PRIEST retir'd, with cautious step they move
To all the secret extacies of love.——
Three days had pass'd, and now an added night
The bridal couch had witness'd their delight;
When all reluctant to his sacred vow,
To other scenes her LOVE prepares to go.
The venerable BARON cried "my Son!"
(Nor guess'd how much the youth indeed was one.)
"Ne'er be it said, I press'd a soldier's stay
"When duty call'd, so prosp'rous be thy way!
"A milk white steed, the comeliest of his race,
"Warm for the charge, and eager for the chace,
"Alike for safety, and for speed, his fame,—
"Fierce to thy fury — to thy temper tame,
"Shall bear thee hence, and oft' remind his Lord
"Of HAREWOOD's Baron, and his CHILD restor'd."

CONSTANCE,

CONSTANCE, whose earlier tears and wakeful heart
 Had wept a long adieu, now scarce could part;
 But gently from her tender bosom drew
 A filken scarf of purest Tyrian hue;
 Soft was the texture, curious to behold,
 And the rich woof was stiff with flow'rs of gold.
 "From CONSTANCE this!"—and scarce the Dame could speak,
 "Wear it for Gratitude, and CONSTANCE' sake!"
 Soft as she bound it o'er his martial vest,
 He seiz'd the time unnotic'd by the rest,
 And on her humid lips a burning kiss impress'd.
 Then his white steed he manfully bestrode,
 Firm as a Hero, graceful as a God!
 CONSTANCE apart with much enduring grief
 From gushing tears procur'd a short relief.

Six moons had duly wan'd, whose pensive light
 Had view'd the secret sorrows of her night:
 When full of days, and languid in decay,
 The BARON own'd the Pow'r whom all obey.

Unmov'd,

Unmov'd, complacent to the common doom,
A gentle summons warn'd him to the tomb.
" My Child ! " he said, " best object of my fight !
" My prize of life ! my ever new delight !
" Dear and more dear around this heart you twine,
" As hastes the hour that comfort to resign.
" In every air which now supplies my breath,
" I hear the gentle messenger of Death.
" Say ! ' ere we part, to all my blessings past
" What added boon shall consecrate the last ? "

Then she ;

" Most honour'd source of CONSTANCE' life and joy !
" To tend whose age has been my life's employ ;
" No wish is left by me to be preferr'd,
" So much of good thy fondness has conferr'd.
" Tho' fairest deeds my filial love attest,
" Should one act cloud the splendour of the rest,
" CONSTANCE in this shall not her Sire deceive,
" This be thy boon ! to hear and to forgive !

“ When various youth, by various views inspir’d,
“ In nuptial rites my virgin bloom desir’d :
“ SIR PIERS alone obtain’d my Father’s voice,
“ Matur’d in wisdom, wife I deem’d thy choice.
“ Yet to my ear was his attention lost,
“ My nature shunn’d him, and my temper cross’d.
“ And since thy will on him alone was bent,
“ To whom my heart could never give consent,
“ All I dismiss’d, by this presumption led,
“ That Love alone could bless the bridal bed.
“ Thy widow’d roof my Mother had assign’d —
“ A mighty charge for such an infant mind !
“ This I embrac’d, severely fix’d to know
“ No pang of love, or not believe it so.
“ To watch thee, soothe thee, still has been my pride,
“ Unfelt, unnotic’d every joy beside.
“ Such was thy Child ; till an unguarded hour
“ Surpriz’d alone in my sequest’red bow’r
“ I saw the horrors of the Ruffians’ steel,
“ Whose dire behest SIR PIERS must know too well.
“ Nor pray’rs, nor tears, the monsters could assuage,
“ My efforts vain—relentless was their rage —
“ O ! then

- “ O! then—— My soul is fired at the name,
“ My godlike Youth, my great Deliverer came;
“ ST. GERMAINS rescu’d me from their alarms——
“ To Life restor’d me, and my Father’s arms.
“ Need I recount the accents of your tongue,
“ When oër thy CONSTANCE half entranc’d you hung?
“ How swell’d your joy, what tender words you said,
“ To the dear Youth what gracious Vows you made,
“ Spontaneous flowing from the tend’rest part,
“ From gratitude’s pure source, the feeling heart?
“ To know his Soul’s first object you requir’d,
“ That you might give what most his heart desir’d.
“ The morrow’s dawn he would have urg’d his plea——
“ Propos’d his first Desire——demanded ME!
“ I heard his Tale——believ’d the Youth sincere——
“ And my love triumph’d oër my sex’s fear.
“ To me he seem’d, with blushes I confess,
“ Born to allure, to captivate, and blest!
“ Ev’n then, my Lord, tho’ yielding to my flame,
“ The Lover’s could not still the Father’s claim.
“ True to my word, I never could desert
“ The filial obligations of my heart.

“ Bound

“ Bound in an oath, that here I might abide,
“ On this condition—I became his Bride!
“ The sacred altar kept my honour clear,
“ And mutual transport made the Compact dear.
“ This is my Crime—I trust of venial kind ——
“ My Virgin Love rewards a noble Mind !”

“ Oh ! Heav’n forefend !” the good old man rejoin’d,
“ That my last words should utter aught unkind.
“ Thou fairest pattern of ingenuous truth !
“ Back to my Blessing call the gallant Youth.
“ Fly swift the messenger that I may own,
“ With pride may own him my accepted Son !
“ Proclaim him as thy spousal rites ordain,
“ Succeeding Lord to all my rich domain.”
This said ; he sunk upon her downy breast,
In short Elysium of recruiting rest.

Soon as the rosy harbinger of light
Drew back the ling’ring curtain of the night,

The

The busy herald, anxious to be gone,
His courser's trapping scarce had buckled on,
When old ANSELMO enter'd at the gate —
Backward he flew, with sudden joy elate,
And to the DAME the welcome tidings brought :
Who, with a warm rapidity of thought,
Pour'd forth her praises that kind heav'n had sent
Her Lord indulgent back, and blest'd th' event.
Nor for ANSELMO can she longer stay ;
But rushing forth prevents full half his way.
Question on question multiplies so fast,
That each enquiry quite confounds the last.
“ How fares his Lord ? If yet he is in fight ?
“ If sleep had calm'd, or toil consum'd the night ?
“ What for his ease or health they can provide ?”
These, and as many greedy words beside,
The faithful veteran hears without reply,
Grief choaks his speech, and drowns the hollow eye.
His haggard looks, clasp'd hands, declare too well
The heavy business that his tongue would tell.
Thrice he essay'd, or e'er his bursting heart
For groans its sad commission could impart.

“ So Heav’n had spar’d my lord, would I had died —
“ No more ST. GERMAINS shall return,” he cried,
“ Forgive my mournful duty, honour’d fair!
“ The tale tho’ brief, is sacred to your ear —
“ War’s early victim panting on the plain,
“ In the big hour of conquest was he slain.
“ With dear bought glory, he receiv’d his wound,
“ Lamented, envied, by his Peers around.
“ Sunk on the earth this arm sustain’d his head,
“ And these the melancholy words he said.
“ I die ANSELMO! from my vest unbind
“ The purple scarf, the rest you leave behind —
“ Sepulchral rites my grateful friends will pay —
“ But thou to HAREWOOD castle speed thy way.
“ Commend me to my CONSTANCE—and beware —
“ How the deep sorrow first shall strike her ear:
“ The Scarf I send her, that it long may prove
“ The dear memorial of our hapless love —
“ Tell her in death”—(but now in vain he tried;)
“ Preserve my CONSTANCE Heav’n!” he said and died.
His story done; the scarf ANSELMO drew.
Of alter’d colour, horrid to her view.

A fud-

A sudden shriek alarm'd her virgin train,
And life's warm current froze in every vein.
To her own chamber trembling they convey
The swooning DAME, to chase the film away.
The good old Man kind Heav'n thought fit to spare
The agony of grief, too strong to bear.
In balmy visions as he drew his breath,
Soft sleep consign'd him to the arms of Death.
Fixt in a stupid woe the Dame resign'd
To fore repining, all her tender mind.

So the lone Bird, upon some ivy'd tow'r,
Pours forth her sorrow at the midnight hour :
Unheard, unseen, she mopes till morning light,
Then to some solitary shade resumes her flight.

At length, rekind'ling piety supplied
The wholesome comforts, which the world denied :
Nor HAREWOOD's blissful groves could calm her pain ——
E'en Spring return'd, and Eden bloom'd in vain ——
She quits the Bow'r ; and seeks the cloister'd Cell,
Where yet her MOTHER and the Vestals dwell.

There

There long she liv'd, and long as life deplor'd
Her wayward Destiny and hapless LORD.

* * * * *

These were thy Trophies, thou inglorious Pile,
Of holy Carnage and religious Spoil !
Thy costly Tow'rs * and thy splendid Floor
In vain conceal'd thy Walls distain'd with Gore :
Where many an unsuspecting Briton lay,
To murder's cool Repast a guiltless Prey !
Down, rugged Spires † ! that with Presumption rise,
The price of Blood ! an impious Sacrifice
To bribe the Vengeance of insulted Heav'n,
And cancel Crimes too foul to be forgiv'n !
So perish SUPERSTITION's baneful Reign,
Lock'd in its native Darkness ne'er to rise again !

* Built by ELFRIDA to expiate the MURDER of King EDWARD the Younger.

† Likewise the Spot where a Multitude of BRITONS were MURDERED by the Treachery of HENGIST.

F I N I S.